

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING WYANDOTTE COUNTY, KANSAS, DISTRICT ATTORNEY NICK TOMASIC

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a tireless, dedicated public servant of long standing, who recently stepped down as District Attorney of Wyandotte County, Kansas, after 32 years of service in that office.

As a former District Attorney of neighboring Johnson County, Kansas for only 12 years—from 1977 to 1989—I worked closely with, and got to know well; Nick Tomasic. First elected in 1972 and re-elected seven times, Nick Tomasic retires as the longest serving district attorney in the history of Kansas. More importantly, however, he leaves a legacy of incorruptible dedication to public service and to the rule of law in our society. As the Kansas City Star article I include with this statement details, Nick Tomasic served the public with integrity and determination, in an environment where holding to such standards was often difficult. As his friend and former colleague, I congratulate him on his well-earned retirement and wish him well in his future endeavors with family and friends. As a fellow former prosecutor, in particular, I commend him on his outstanding record of accomplishment as Wyandotte County District Attorney. He leaves a legacy which I am confident will never be equaled by his successors.

[From the Kansas City Star, Jan. 8, 2005]

TOMASIC IS PRAISED FOR 32 YEARS OF SERVICE

(By Robert A. Cronkleton)

Wyandotte County District Attorney Nick Tomasic pulled out one of several scrapbooks of newspaper clippings that he has kept over the years.

Thumbing through the pages on Friday, he recalled facts of cases he prosecuted decades ago. The details are as fresh as if he had been in court the previous day. In one book he paused at a picture of himself and ran his fingers over it.

"That's the day I was first sworn in as district attorney," Tomasic said, chuckling at his horn-rimmed glasses and youthful appearance.

On Monday, Tomasic's reign as the county's first and only district attorney will end. He has held that position for 32 years. His successor, Assistant District Attorney Jerome A. Gorman, will be sworn in at 10 a.m. in Division 1 at the courthouse. Gorman, a Democrat like Tomasic, was unopposed in the November general election.

"When you look ahead, 32 years is a long time," Tomasic said. "But when you are looking back, it doesn't seem that long."

Tomasic, 72, was first elected in 1972 and re-elected seven times. He is the longest-serving district attorney in Kansas history, dating to when the post was created in the early 1970s. Before being elected to the post, he had served six years as an assistant county attorney.

Tomasic came to the position when machine politicians held sway at the courthouse and Kansas City, Kan., City Hall. He said he tried to be apolitical and rid his office of special-interest influences.

He recalled that early on, people with political ties would send hams, turkeys, whiskey and beer to the district attorney's office around Christmas time. He put an end to that.

"It was not right to do it," Tomasic said. "The right thing was to stay out of politics."

But that didn't mean he wasn't willing to take on political corruption. In an early skirmish, Tomasic ousted two Board of Public Utilities members after a state investigation revealed widespread corruption.

One of the most difficult cases he faced was the prosecution of former Kansas City, Kan., Police Officer John Cheek, who was convicted of voluntary manslaughter in the 1994 shooting death of Milton Foster Jr.

One exception to his rule of keeping the district attorney's office out of politics came in the mid-1990s when he strongly urged voters to approve the consolidation of the Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., governments.

Tomasic announced in 2003 he would not run for re-election to the post.

"I think he has been a great district attorney," said Wyandotte County District Judge Thomas L. Boeding. He said Tomasic established himself early on as a district attorney who intended to do what he believed was right.

"He sometimes filed cases that raised eyebrows in people's eyes," Boeding said. "He was determined that he was going to do what the rule of law required and not be fixed on favoritism."

Kansas City, Kan., Police Chief Ron Miller said Tomasic is well respected in the community, including among law enforcement.

"He represents the public very well, and he supports law enforcement," Miller said. "He has had, unfortunately, to prosecute police officers for criminal conduct in his tenure, but those were decisions he had to make, and he made the tough decision."

Tomasic, who lives on Strawberry Hill in Kansas City, Kan., said he doesn't have much planned yet, except to spend time with his family, including 12 grandchildren and two more on the way. He expects to do volunteer work.

He will miss his staff as well as the job.

"I never had a day where I hated to come to work," Tomasic said. "Not one day. There might have been days where I was not particularly happy about something, but I never hated to come to work."

THE HON. ROSA L. DELAURO OF CONNECTICUT HONORS ELIZABETH A. DEMIR FOR HER OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

**HON. ROSA L. DELAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join family,

friends, colleagues, and the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital in recognizing an outstanding member of our community, Elizabeth A. Demir. After more than a decade of leadership, Ms. Demir will step down as chair of the Parenting Support Programs at the Children's Hospital.

Too often, young pregnant women are alone and have very little support. Through the Friends of Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Ms. Demir founded the "Bright Beginnings" program as a way to reach out to these young women to ensure that they stayed in school, held onto jobs, had a safe home environment, were protective of their health care, and developed good parenting skills. "Bright Beginnings" is a volunteer-based program which pairs young pregnant women with mentors who can help them share their concerns about parenthood. While its primary goal is to make sure that the women and babies receive regular medical care, it also includes education about how to detect and prevent health problems and childhood accidents as well as the importance of early intellectual stimulation of infants and toddlers. The program also teaches young mothers how to set personal goals and increase confidence. It has been an invaluable tool to many young women facing the often daunting challenges of becoming a parent.

Building on the "Bright Beginnings" program, Ms. Demir is also responsible for its expansion into three additional parenting programs—Home Visiting, Nurturing Connections, and Parenting Group. Each of these programs is uniquely designed to meet the needs of young, under-served families—making a real difference in the lives of both mother and child. Ms. Demir has long been the driving force behind the success of these programs. Her enthusiasm and energy is unparalleled. Program developer, chief photographer, truck driver or board chair, Ms. Demir has done anything and everything to ensure that each of these invaluable programs are available to those in need.

From leading a board meeting to getting down on the floor with a room full of six-month old children dressed like pumpkins, her deep commitment to young mothers and their children has left an indelible mark on our community. In recognition of her tireless efforts, generosity, and compassion, I am proud to stand today and extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Elizabeth A. Demir. Though her departure marks the end of her tenure as chair of the Parenting Support Programs, I have little doubt that Ms. Demir will continue to make a difference in our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to state that it was my intention to vote

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.